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Director of Central Intelligence

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ARGENTINA: Opposition to Alfonsin

//President Alfonsin faces growing discontent in the military and more determined opposition from key civilian groups. 3.5(c)

//Officers reportedly are upset about organizational changes and proposed budget cuts, as well as press attacks on the military for human rights abuses. Several retired generals recently have been punished, and a commander on active duty has been retired for criticizing government policies. 3.3(b)(1)

Alfonsin is sufficiently 3.3(b)(1)
disturbed to try to reduce tensions. He is primarily concerned about getting the cooperation of judges who oppose his reform of the military code of justice, a key to ensuring his ability to limit human rights investigations. 3.5(c)

On the labor front, Alfonsin's proposal for reforming the unions was defeated in the Senate by a coalition of Peronists and conservatives, according to press reports. The proposal would have forced the heads of the Peronist-dominated unions to face new internal elections. 3.5(c)

Comment: Opposition to Alfonsin is beginning to coalesce as indictments and trials of officers accused of human rights violations move forward, reforms are debated, and summer vacations end. The President probably realizes that the euphoria from his election victory is dissipating and that the success of future legislative initiatives will require greater concessions. The Peronists are encouraged by the defeat of the labor reform bill, and they are likely to take a strong stand in congressional debates, the budget, IMF negotiations, and other sensitive issues. 3.5(c)

//In the military, the service chiefs and most officers remain committed to civilian rule. As a result, they probaby will countenance convictions of the 12 or so former commanders under investigation or detention. Unrest will spread among the military, however, unless the President can ease public criticism and prevent human rights investigations from reaching the middle-level officers.

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